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Nature

Accept this poem as
Your Friend
H. Cook
Rothbury January 1864

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

I've mused upon thee in the forest glen.
By the lone river from the haunts of men.
There I have mused and musing have methought
What inward gathering for the mind's bear wrot
From scenes of nature. —

Vide page .

NATURE:

ON FREEDOM OF MIND:

AND OTHER POEMS.

BOSTON:
DUTTON & WENTWORTH,
1839.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R L

PREFACE.

My sincere thanks to the patrons of this small volume. If any light has been thrown upon the subject of the "Rights of Man," it will yield satisfaction to

THE AUTHOR.

WOR 19FEB36

NATURE.

NATURE! sweet is the record of thy truth,
Whether in manhood or in blooming youth;
Thy power is great! thy sweetness how refin'd!
Tuning to harmony the thoughts of mind.
I've mus'd upon thee in the forest glen,
By the lone river, from the haunts of men;
Here I have mus'd, and musing have methought
What inward gath'ring for the mind's been wro't
From scenes of nature,—in its freedom state,
Freed from the trammels of a fashion'd gait;
How works the mind within the shadowy dale,
The woody circuit, or the mountain's pale?
Ask of the child! how sweetly does it love
To skip and gambol thro' the shady grove,—
Happy in this, its freeborn gift to wear,
Its happy nature with the world to share;

Art ne'er combines within its tiny breast,
To rend the fabric of its happy zest,—
For here in truth, the nature of the mind,
Spurns the rude conflict which a form would bind;
Still view amid the older growth of years,
As mid the wood, how faintly fashion peers;
Here, man beholds his freeborn state appear,
He heeds not fashion, nor the scoffer's jeer;
He seeks his own! he claims his soul-born thought,
Nor thinks to ask another to be bought;
Erect his image, spurning those base chains
Which custom sanctions as the soul complains.

Turn now unto the peopled crowd of life,
And view the conflict of a worldly strife;
View how from nature sadly are estranged,
Those thoughts and actions which by forms are rang'd;
We've seen the triumph of the mind within,
When viewed at distance from the city's din:
Can we not range among the peopl'd crowd,
Freed from the trammels of the formal proud?
Can we not act in mindliness of truth?
Can we not share with buoyancy of youth?
Must we kneel ever in a formal mood?
(Not forms denying which partake of good,)
Is man his own? or is he but a name,
Born but to sport unto an earth-born claim?

Has he no mind? no heritage inwrought?
Was he born subject to another's thought?
Yet so it seems,—for many oft are found,
Who tread with measure to this empty sound.
Voice of pure nature! which with radiance teems,
How meteor-like thy gorgeous transit seems,
When lengthen'd thought thou kindl'st forth anew,
Bursts from its archive kindled into few;
See the plain rustic, in an anxious cause,
Gath'r the homage of the world's applause;
His nature echoes to the heart's recess,
In thought of joy, or feeling of distress;
He seeks for language mid the waves' white foam,
The vast lone forest, the unsculpt'd dome;
He seeks the mountains to illume the way,
And echoing emblems at his call obey;
As Henry* cleft the fabric which had bound
His innate genius from the world around,
He like a bright star in the noon of night,
Rose for his country with a fiery light:
His was the gift, the eloquence of pow'r,
Which dazzles sophists in their brightest hour,
O'erturns the actions of a fashion'd art,
And subjects reason to the human heart.
How great thy pow'r amid the human heart,
When call'd in action to endure a part;

*Patrick Henry.

As the lov'd maiden, mid the battle fray,
Seeks for her lover mid the field's dismay,
Thus nature leaps the boundary of fear,
To seek a trophy or to veil a tear.
See sculptur'd emblems deck the parted's tomb,
Shaded with laurel and the myrtle's bloom;
Fit emblems these, memorials of the dead,
They speak a language whose response has fled;
So 'tis when inward grief subdues the mind,
Shaded within by nature, soothing, kind;
Thoughts deeply graven, seem but to impart
The lone memorial of the feeling heart.
How oft, O Nature! as thy power reserv'd,
Lies in the recess of the heart preserv'd,
Enduring scoff, the ridicule of those
Whose self-conceit with ignorance arose;
As some rich mine the depth of earth conceals,
Nor e'er its lustre to the world reveals,
Till startling science strikes the world aghast,
Who seek the treasure which they cannot grasp;
So Fulton's noble mind the Hudson* shook,
He bade the fetter'd at his genius look;
He knew the gift which nature had in store,
To guide his steamer thro' the ocean's roar.
Yield strength to genius! let its germ unfold,
To seek for treasures which remain untold;

* Hudson River.

Let niggard envy seek a higher aim,
And yield the tribute to a just earn'd fame:
Would Cæsar's empire e'er have been uprear'd,
If slumbering apathy its growth had sear'd?
Facts unbeknown, save where an envious growth,
Where malice festers to usurp thy growth,
O Nature! such the votaries of thy own,
Endure how oft, yet ne'er thy pow'r disown:
Where slander grows, see good men oft revil'd,
Yielding its venom like the Upas wild;
Unnat'ral growth, it yielded nought to thee,
Save in thy bondage to the good and free;
How oft is nature, in its fairest mould,
Check'd by the rancour of a tale twice told,
Gossip'd and hawk'd, where fashion holds its mart,
To seek the umpire o'er a broken heart;
Pile upon pile, it rears a brazen mound,
And bids defiance to the mind profound;
Search ye within, the rancour oft you'll find
Springs from the ruins of a shipwreck'd mind.
How oft we wander from the way of life,
And meet in conflict with the spirit's strife;
A happy nature is above all gold,
Which man possesses, with his nature sold;
More wealth has nature in her ample store,
More lavish plenty does she kindly pour,

Than India's realm, or wealth on inland mart,
'Tis found within the nature of the heart.
Some cleave to forms, they love the freeborn heart,
Yet, strange to speak it, dare not act the part;
For why, in fear of those who draw the formal line,
Who seek such victims for the tattling shrine;
While 'tis in freeborn action we behold
The spark which struck the battle-fires of old.
How oft a tongue, with face as smooth, combin'd,
To some appears as sovereignty of mind;
A model these, to teach to rising youth,
The claims of friendship, and the claims of truth;
Others, who scorn a double face to wear,
Oft have the faults of hypocrites to share;
How oft man seeks to rule o'er fellow-man,
His faults, his actions, he is wont to scan;
Oft with a modicum of brains you'll find,
His "brass" oft answers for his want of mind;
While one who thinks but little for himself,
Is gull'd by wholesale, by such quacks of pelf:
[illegible]s leads us now to muse at mammon's shrine,
To view a worldling, with his money shine;
'Tis said the tailor oft makes man anew,
But greater far does mammon hold to view;
In spite of truth, of nature, and of right,
Mammon is worshipp'd as the man outright;

While one the sov'reign of the mind jogs on,
If he's no money he's a "loafer" born;
'Tis not in all, thanks to a race of men
Who view with reason, what some clowns condemn.
There is a craving in the mind of man,
Which seeks an outlet,—from whence it can
Send forth breathings,—its inbred freedom rights
Unshackled, freed from the forms of wights,
Whose narrow minds prejudge a motive, deed,
By what is said by others of their creed.

Reader! excuse us if plain words we use,
While we in you some simple truths infuse;
How oft youths have this picture held to view,
That to be wealthy, we must needs pursue,
The train of thought, the humbleness of mind,
The lowly toil, which we in rustics find;
Which they endure, who leave the plough and rake,
And seek the city, and their fortunes make;
'Tis right, 'tis gladd'ning to the heart of man,
To make the rustic happy if we can;
Yet we must hold the city youths to view,
'Mid pride and forms the rustic never knew;
While in this pride, these forms unnat'ral grown,
They cannot reap wherein the rustic's sown;
For "pride of place," the taunt, the jeer of those,
In meaning friends, but who in practice foes,

Deters the youth, (if penniless beside,)
From "taking up" a living 'neath his pride;
Here lies the secret. Successful toil we find
Lies in the freeborn action of the mind:
Free man to choose, without the worldings jeer,
For want of better, yield him homlier fare;
'Tis pride! 'tis erring pride which darts,
The poison'd chalice into youthful hearts.
Man's nature should be his! his should be,
The birthright action of his own mind,—free!
Free him to choose the pathway of his life,
If honest 'tis, not wedded unto strife;
For sure the spirit sadly does complain,
When nature acts not, but a part does feign.
There seems a dearth of feeling in the old,
There seems the spirit of the formal, cold,
In some,—who view with microscopic eye,
Who seek 'mid youthful buoyancy to pry;
A wanting of the thoughts of other days,
When they like youth were varied in their ways;
And can youth have the judgment or the lore,
Which three score years have garner'd in deep store?
Sure the same charity which o'er them was cast,
Should ne'er be buried in forgotten past;
Thoughts of these youths, in years maturer grown,
Oft vie with those, who erst had lesser shown.

Hope, nature's handmaid swells the tide of song,
And buoys our feelings in their course along;
For thou O hope, presagest from the past,
And o'er the future thy bright visions cast;
And now ye fair, excuse us as we write,
While we for you a simple truth indite;
Nature distorted view in woman's eye,
It pleads her suff'ring by the mournful sigh;
Form'd in the beauty of thy own fair mould,
She seeks the corset for a stronger fold.
And man can change his nature! as the mind
Receives impressions of the true, refined,—
Wrong thoughts discarding, gath'ring from the pure,
His thoughts partaking of the good and sure;
From a strong zealot in a cause, you'll find
How oft man turns to opposite of mind;
How oft a thought condemned by one as sin,
Reverse of fortune, leaves the same in him;
'Tis thus we learn how changing is the mind,
A clown to-day, a saint, the next, we find.
How great thy pow'r amid a single thought,
Which pure from thee has wond'rous workings wro't;
View Franklin claiming kindred with the skies;
A thought bro't pæans from enraptur'd eyes;
View the brave chieftain 'mid the battle fray,
A thought proclaims him victor of the day;

Search mid the triumphs of the good and great,
How oft a thought has led them to their state;
Eternal are thy truths! the heart receiving thee,
Speaks in the language of the good and free,—
Form'd on the basis of thy laws alone,
Heart reaches heart, spontaneous with thy own.
In thee, O Nature, lies a heartfelt joy,
Which springs spontaneous! as the floating buoy
Swims o'er the circuit of the ocean's foam,
Guiding the mariner to some friendly home,
So thou dost guide, with buoyancy of life,
The spirit's conflict from a worldly strife;
And thus, O Nature, we've discours'd on thee!
Belov'd thy pow'r, how beauteous and how free!
Thine is the beauty to entrance the eye,—
In vale or forest, in the blue gem'd sky;
Thine is the might to picture to our view
This simple truth—we must the heart subdue;
For thou performest to the will of Heav'n,
And unto man in thought of good wert giv'n.
Nature! thy theme exhaustless is to man,
Known but to Him, who measures with a span
The orbs above, the earth below His throne,
Whose gifts we now with adoration own!

ON FREEDOM OF MIND.

ON FREEDOM OF MIND.

HARMONIOUS NATURE! breathing from on high,
Mirror'd in beauty, on the distant sky;
Thee would I seek, thy sweetness to inspire,
Thy image, freedom, to attune my lyre.
For thou hast strength, beyond a fashion'd art,
To subject reason to the human heart;
Oh, strongly breathe upon my heartfelt lay,
And guide me onward to a free essay;
To search awhile, apart from bigot pride,
To search the mind, where freedom should abide.
Sad is the triumph o'er a fallen foe,
Sad is the moaning when the storm-winds blow;
Yet pierce the veil which hides the anguish'd blast,
And truth will echo, kindly has it past.
(I would be plain,—be understood in this,—
Cow'd ones there are, to whom the cup of bliss

Passes but seldom, for diff'ring from the heart,
Their actions vary to the tune of art;
They think with fear, they act with servile fear,
They combat feeling with the silent tear;
To do, to act, oft pictures them to view,
Steming forms tempest like a shipwreck'd crew;
Now tossed here, now borne upon the gale,
Hurl'd by stern fashion, at the quiv'ring sail;
Some struggle on,—a beacon light they find
Gilding the passage to the port of mind;
Here moor'd in safety, grateful to their sight,
O'er the rude billow shines the free-born light.
The cow'd! these we have drawn beneath the broad sunlight,
The rites revealing of their mystic night;
They to disclose, yet seeking nought but facts,
The why and wherefore of their thoughts and acts.)
Nature distorted view within your reach,
In artful forms, in action, and in speech.
Why roamed the Pilgrims from their father land,
A refuge seeking on the western strand?
For this they roam'd, their longing this to find,
Freedom to worship with an unchain'd mind.
Why gather armies to the battle fray,
For triumph seeking 'mid the field's dismay?
'Tis the same spirit echo'd here we find
Spurning the fetter as it shackles mind.

Now view the slavery of the free-born mind,
Cow'd in its bondage, with a nature kind.
View ye past youths—the changing of the heart,
Sweet Freedom's longings, and sweet joys depart.
Unloose their minds, from fetters which had bound,
Their inward feelings, from the world around;
Search ye their minds—search ye within the veil
Which hid their nature, from the outward pale—
For here lay deep, in many a youthful breast,
Thoughts which in ambush found a fever'd rest;
Thoughts, which had germ'd, too feeble for the world,
The tempest tossings which around were hurl'd;
Thoughts misconstru'd ere action had begun,
In wild confusion with the spirit run.
Thoughts, buried deep, nought seeming to impart
Save the memorial of the feeling heart.
Then view them borne upon Life's billowy tide,
Then view the waning of their once-lov'd pride,
Then view them mind-toss'd with a by-word fame—
Their nature struggling with an unsought name;
Then view those thoughts which sprung with 'fancy's ray,'
'Smiling at grief'—to ease the 'troubled way.'
Now view them seek the wine-cup lifted high,
Now view the phrenzy in the maniac eye;
Then hear those tones, like moaning of the wind—
Deep tones sepulchral from the human mind.

Why seem'd these youths, like rising orbs on high,
Young orbs, receding from their kindred sky?
With anxious eyes did ye not mark their trail,
Closing in darkness as they cleft their pale?
Ye saw those spirits struggling to be free,
Ye saw those spirits in their agony!
'Twas sad! "in op'ning youth's delightful hour,"
To view the the tempest with its darkness low'r;
Some ye saw gather'd at the sparkling bowl,
Ye saw them sink amid its whirlpool roll;
Some ye saw gather'd for a distant land,
To seek the welcome of the stranger hand;
While some their "high reluctant spirits" bow'd,
They rank'd among the lowly cowed;
And some with toil, with early laden toil,
Their life-blood yielded with the midnight oil;
Some nerv'd for agony, endur'd their fate,
Their martyr gath'ring, with unshaken state.
Thus ye have view'd the passage of the mind,
Thro' the dark tempest and the madd'ning wind;
While upward shone from reason's orb a light,
Which faintly glimmer'd o'er the folds of night.
These ye have seen; then whence the rising tide,
Which sought to whelm the youthful in their pride?
Ask now thyself Hast thou within a mind,
A mind thou'rt willing to another bind?

To yield thy freedom for a doomed state,
Where mind but struggles to repine its fate?
To bend the knee unto the vain behest,
Of cow'red formalists who dimly rest?
Oh, search thyself—has ne'er a vibrate sound
Thy life-blood startled in its narrow bound?
Have throbs of anguish, servitude alone—
Ne'er beckon'd reason to usurp her throne?
Ye claim'd thy freedom at this trying hour—
Will ye not yield it to a weaker pow'r?
See goaded ones, their minds to others giv'n,
Their own destroy'd by phrenzy madly driv'n—
See as they pass the tributary line,
Their fulness gather for a quick decline;
What profit this, to yield to other minds?
Our own to lose, to scatter to the winds.
View we ourselves, apart from others pride,
Ourselves to see, the dross to lay aside.
Here we can view the courage or the fear,
Which seeks a trophy, or which veils a tear;
Here we behold the florid gem of price—
'To buy, the Indies never can suffice.
'Tis inly set, its motto read apart—
'Tis mind's self comfort—gratitude of heart.
And yet this pearl, how oft we throw aside—
For gew-gaw nothingness, for other's pride.

Still search ye on—mark'd ye the lowly tread
Of some, whose converse, whisper'd of the dead—
Some blest by nature, to adorn her own,
Who lov'd the freedom which around her shone?
Why have they droop'd like flowers in spring time past,
Their incense gather'd by the northern blast?
They found in man a servitude of mind,
A spirit-bondage, seeming but to bind
Their noblest birthright which in Eden shone—
Freedom, where conscience could assert its own.
Ask of the tomb, and as ye ask it mourn—
Why they in bloom have sought the distant bourne.
Ask why the record, numbers with the dead,
The noble minded, in their spring time fled.
Yet pause we here—for sacred is the grief,
Which mourns the blossom, ere it shed the leaf.
Ye now have seen chain'd spirits in afright,
"Unknowing whitherward to bend" their flight;
These youth's ye've seen, have seen in boyhood hours,
Those hours, when life should be as summer flow'rs;
Flowers, which have grown, with nature, sweet and fair,
But minds imprison'd could not nature share.

Thus we've unveil'd the secrets of the mind,
Thoughts why corroded we have sought to find;
We've view'd the youthful blooming into life,
We've trac'd their downfall 'mid the spirit's strife.

These ye have seen, ye saw them but to weep,
At the rude havoc of the tempest's sweep;
For these cow'd youths, did Freedom sigh to save,
To save the youthful, from an early grave.
Farewell ye youths—for you the early sped,
The tears of Nature o'er your mounds we shed.
The veil we close—yet sad has been the task,
Which sped me onward, to unveil the mask
Which screens from those, who cleave to forms of art,—
The "simple annals" of the broken heart.

Life seems a vision'd slumber, as we wake
From a self-bondage, to the mind's own state.
Are we our own? Are we to bend our own,
To gusty nothingness, to slavery's tone?
We are our own! our's alone the power
To shield our nature in the adverse hour.
Search ye within—for here this truth is found,
When Nature acts, self-comfort will abound.
Reason for guidance, greatness here you find,
Springing spontaneous from the human mind.
Not cow'd by forms—to others never sold—
A nature noble, will the mind behold.
Now on—to stem the tempest and the wave,
Not glory seeking, but a mind to save.
Then Freedom's voice will hush the tempest's roar,
And bid the wave its eddying whirl no more.

For 'bove the abject feeling of the world,
Its light will guide thee, with its stars unfurl'd.
Still, like unto the sea, are myriads borne
Upon the tide where fashion sweeps along;
Yet some, like unto sov'reign isles, we find,
Spurning the bombast of the abject mind—
Thus mind to mind, the clashing twain we see,
As islands sov'reign to the silver'd sea.

POEMS.

ADDRESS:

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE LION THEATRE,

IN PROVIDENCE,

BY MRS. HOUPT, MAY 10, 1836.

When Gothic darkness o'er the world bore sway,
In simple thought was tun'd the Drama's lay;
Here THALIA gazed—anon, her joyous mien
With THESPIS towering, burst upon the scene.
They led the Arts to sweet Italia's shore,
The joyous tidings they to Britain bore—
Then SHAKSPEARE rose!—the world with rapture saw,
And Learning startled at the Drama's lore;
Then sunk the gloom of intellectual light,
And radiant nature burst upon the sight.
Since this glad hour, the Drama's thought
A flood of virtues o'er the land has wrought.

In scenes of splendor and of fiction lost
The erring mind on whirlpools has been tost.
When homely truth, the moral of the stage,
Stamped glowing follies of the passing age.

Friends of the Drama! welcome to this dome—
Here truth and feeling ever'll find a home.
Here, at this Portal, we to honor blend
Aspiring Genius, with the name of Friend;
And manly worth, to soar o'er Envy's scorn
Well clad in armor to resist its storm.
Here, shall sweet Innocence her rights maintain,
And Vice shall wither at the Drama's name—
For modest worth our banner we'll unfurl,
On kingly guilt a bold defiance hurl.
Patrons and Friends—your Plaudits we would ask,
If we are honest in our nightly task,
As hand to hand, by Wit and Fancy led,
A brilliant lustre o'er the Drama's shed.
Here, the fair Queen of Satire's realm will sit
And judge the plaudits of the Box and Pit;
Hither may age and youth with joy repair,
Smile on our efforts and our banquet share.
Long may this Temple be your boasted pride,
On honor based—by virtue purified—
Here may you view true characters appear,
And hail the advent of the drama here.

THE GENIUS OF LIBERTY:

SPOKEN BY MR. AYLING,

ON THE OCCASION OF MRS. W. H. SMITH'S BENEFIT,

At the Tremont Theatre, Nov. 30, 1838.

DEDICATED TO THE "BERRY STREET RANGERS."

When war "grim visag'd" o'er the plain,
In floods of gore had laid the slain;
When rallying strength had sought the fight,
And mercy shudder'd at the sight,—
'Twas then arose a seraph form,
'Twas on the breeze of triumph borne;
She came dispelling in her way
The suff'ring of a tyrant's sway:
The war mists gather'd for their flight,
They beacon'd an inglorious sight,
For she had usher'd in her might,
And rallied those brave sons of fight,

Those, who had sought their Country's own—
The "Ranger's Sword," it blaz'ning shone.
This flag she wav'd unto the world,
The flag of stars and stripes unfurl'd;
The scroll illumined page of old,
The charter of our freedom bold,
She wav'd, and with a glowing pride,
The welkin rung both far and wide.
She sung of peace—a bulwark here,
"Our Country's safe"—allay all fear,—
The Country of your father's fame,
She utter'd, was a gloried claim;
Be this your aim,—defend those rights
Bequeathed to you on Bunker's heights;
Thus said, she sallied from the gaze
Of awe struck tyrants in amaze:
These to preserve, she left to you—
The Ranger's arm,—the good, the true.

OLD vs. NEW TIMES.

DEDICATED TO THE "RISING GENERATION,"

How varied from the olden way,
Are fashions of the present day.
The strength with which our fathers trod
Has faded with them 'neath the sod.
Once error found no resting place,—
To wear a patch was no disgrace.
Then dress was not the wish'd for food,
'Twas manly prototype of good.
The open heart the mind betold,—
It stamped the goodly days of old.
The humble tales of joys and woes,
Within the mind with friendship rose—
But now the artless tale appears
Too simple for our new bred ears.
Once comfort crowned the ancient day
How strangely has it passed it away!

Then was the humble dwelling seen,
Girded with verdure sweetly green,
It now befits not lordly pride
Such degredation to abide.
For we must bow to other minds,
And wear the yoke which slavery binds.
As shining worth gilds error's night,
Soon does it vanish from the sight;
For fashion's slaves ne'er wear a gem,
When titled ones the same condemn.
'Tis thus 'mid fashion's growth we find,
The abject servitude of mind.
Farewell to good old happiness;
We'll bow to pride and emptiness,
And yield unto the pride of place,
True comfort and an honest face.
Too humble are the joys of old;
They seem like dismal night dreams told,
Born but to perish at their birth,
Too fleeting to remain on earth.

In Taunton, near the seat of Judge Morton, lies a churchyard.—Here encompassed by a narrow paling, are the graves of a mother and her two children:—During the summer months, clusters of Roses, (planted by the Father,) are seen blooming o'er their graves.

THE GARDEN OF THE GRAVES.

Here sleep beneath the verdant mound,
The mother with her babes;
And nature's incense sweeps around,
Sweet o'er their humble graves.

'Twas kind remembrance placed them here,
'Twas feeling, pure and kind—
Those emblems of the pure and fair
That sprung from heavenly mind.

Methought a flow'ret I would claim
From o'er this humble spot;
But conscience—did aloud proclaim
Thou stranger—touch them not.

I mus'd within my wayward mind
The sev'rance from its green,
That which had sprung from love so kind
To gild this churchyard scene.

And ye who pass this roseate spot,
Where incense gently waves—
Oh muse awhile, oh mar it not,
For beauteous are these graves.